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Korea's Chun Likely to Give Apology on TV

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Public Admission of Abuses
During Rule Could Ease
Pressure on His Successor

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SEOUL, South Korea—Former South Korean President Chun Doo Hwan is expected to apologize tomorrow in a televised address for alleged corruption and abuses of power that occurred during his rule.

An apology may not satisfy the thousands of protesters who have taken to the streets recently in sometimes violent demonstrations calling for the arrest and prosecution of Mr. Chun. But it may give President Roh Tae Woo, who has said he doesn't think legal action against his predecessor is appropriate, a chance to convince average South Koreans that they should let Mr. Chun fade into quiet retirement.

Analysts say that what happens to Mr. Chun is important because it may set a precedent for the future of Korean politics. If he is allowed to live quietly in Korea, he will be the first major postwar Korean leader to step down in an orderly transition of power and spend his retirement in his own country. Syngman Rhee died in exile in Hawaii after being toppled by a student revolution, and Park Chung Hee was assassinated by the head of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency.

Tainted Legacy

Mr. Chun is scheduled to appear on government television tomorrow in a broadcast from his home. Both opposition and ruling party politicians say they hope he will apologize, promise to return wealth that many Koreans believe he obtained through irregular means, and pledge to retire to the countryside.

If Mr. Chun's apology for his alleged misdeeds is seen as sincere, it may lessen the tension that has been building since he stepped down in February. Dealing with Mr. Chun's legacy has been his successor's biggest problem.

While Mr. Roh shares Mr. Chun's military background and assisted in his seizure of power in a 1979 coup, the new president has been making largely successful gestures to establish himself in Koreans' minds as a democrat. Yet the taint of the repressive Fifth Republic, as Mr. Chun's rule is known here, continues to burden both Mr. Roh and his Democratic Justice Party, which was founded by Mr. Chun. Many people still joke bitterly that Mr. Roh has brought not a Sixth Republic, but a "5.5 Republic."

Heightened Emotions

Although corruption hasn't been proven in Mr. Chun's case, many Koreans despise him for his armed seizure of power. The new administration hasn't made any moves toward prosecuting Mr. Chun, but the government has gone after his family. Mr. Chun's younger brother is serving seven years for embezzlement and other crimes, and seven other relatives including his elder brother and his wife's brother have been arrested on corruption charges. Anti-Chun emotions have been heightened by the revelations in those cases.

The opposition parties of Kim Dae Jung and Kim Young Sam have been wavering in their demands for prosecution, but they appear to believe that a political solution—an apology, return of property and Mr. Chun leaving Seoul—is preferable to the courts.

However, Kim Young Sam's Reunification Democratic Party has indicated it may push for at least a judicial investigation, if not actual arrest and prosecution. "To persuade the people, there must be